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ABSTRACT

This paper suggests ways in which video can be used in teaching college literature and cinema courses in order to promote audiovisual literacy. The method proposed presupposes an approach to narrative through narratology, the discipline that examines texts of narrative fiction as narratives, irrespective of their mode of manifestation (verbal, visual, or other). Narratologists posit three terms for the textual analysis of narratives: story and narration, which are conceived in abstract terms, and text, which is the only concrete entity available to the reader. By employing a film narrative, such as Guy Hamilton's "Evil Under the Sun" (a detective story film based on Agatha Christie's classic of the same title) as a case study, the instructor can take advantage of the concreteness and immediacy of cinematic image, as well as the versatility of video, to make abstract notions more understandable. In practice, the method of video application to the teaching of narrative theory is the following: a single session is devoted to the uninterrupted viewing of the entire film so as not to spoil the pleasure of the first reading. In the next session, an analysis of the film's structure is attempted, introducing certain aspects of theory, such as plot structure and design, narrative strategies and modes of narration, the role of the narrator, and textual relationships. Selected excerpts from the film text are provided to illustrate theoretical concepts. (Contains 19 references.) (AEF)

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THE VIDEO IN THE CLASSROOM: AGATHA CHRISTIE'S "EVIL UNDER THE SUN" AND THE TEACHING OF NARRATOLOGY THROUGH FILM

by
Michael Kokonis

Educational technology has made tremendous strides in introducing the new audiovisual and electronic media in the teaching of any subject, especially language teaching. Since the 1980's many institutions have adopted the use of video over traditional film technology because it is less costly and more user friendly. It is natural to expect that there are many technology-prone teachers who make ample use of the new technologies in the teaching of literature as well. However there is little documentation of specific methods of video use in the literature classroom. The aim of this paper is to suggest some ways in which the versatile facilities of video can be put to effective use in teaching literature as well as cinema courses at a college or university level, with the intent to promote audio-visual literacy. The method proposed for video applications to the teaching of literature, especially fiction, presupposes an approach to narrative through the tenets of narratology, the discipline that examines texts of narrative fiction as narratives, irrespective of their mode of manifestation (whether verbal, visual, or other).

Methods and Aims of Teaching Literature on Video

There has been considerable research done on the practical applications of video, which has enjoyed wide use in all fields of education in thousands of institutions all over the world. However, most of the research has been concentrated on video as an aid to support language teaching.[1] The software video material employed varies from documentaries, advertisements, news, and general entertainment, including film narratives. But even when film narratives are used, the aim is either to improve speaking and writing language skills, or, in extended curricula, where literature and the arts are integrated in language courses, films shown on video are meant to help students appreciate literature to improve writing and composition.[2]

As far as literature courses themselves are concerned, there have been only a few articles or books exploring methods for using commercial films on VCRs to study themes, formal elements of literature, literary terms, and the aesthetic decisions behind film adaptations of literary works, as for example in the manner described by R. H. Fehlman (1987), in "Quoting Films in English Class." A practical method is suggested by Rodney D. Keller (1985) in "Movies and Literary Elements," a paper presented at the International Reading Association Conference, in Idaho: The writer proposes showing short, ten-minute movie clips to motivate students to read literature and explore elements of fiction such as plot, character, setting, symbol, irony, and theme.

In other cases, movies are shown for comparative purposes, e.g., between literature and cinema, in courses concentrating on problems of adaptation. Thierry Lancien's (1988) "Litterature et cinema: de la page a l' ecran" (Literature and Film: From Page to Screen) is a case in point, since the article looks at the process of making a novel into film by focusing on comparisons of composition, characters, and language. Similarly, Sue Heibling (1985) in "The Dollmaker: A Cross-Media Approach," uses the novel and television adaptation of Harriet Arnow's "The Dollmaker" to teach problems of translating literature into film. Problems of adaptation from a literary to

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film narrative pose no obstacle to developing a teaching methodology for the practical analysis of narratives provided that they are explained to the students early in the course.

Far more interesting, however, is an approach of examining a literary topic in an interdisciplinary manner, that is, by placing it in the wider context of art. Dorothy M. Jehle (1990) in "Medieval Romances: Perceval to Monty Python," traces the appearance of medieval themes, motifs and characters in works of modern poetry, fiction and films. Also interesting is the notion of drawing on the tenets of a particular theory from one discipline and applying these tenets to another: For example, the application of literary theory to film theory. Lynn Kear (1988) in "Teaching Film Studies: The Viewer Response Approach," examines how Louise Rosenblatt's reader response theory can be applied to film study in the classroom. In the view of reader response theorists, although there are differences between film and literature as media, the processes that one uses to make sense of literature and film are similar.

Narrative as a Teaching Subject on Video

The approach to be followed here will also account for the similarities between reader and viewer response, but it will be couched within the wider perspective of narratology, which takes care of the more complex relationships between author and text as well as reader and text. Narratology is the discipline that examines texts of fiction primarily as narratives, irrespective of the mode of their discursive manifestation, that is, verbal, visual, or audiovisual. The terms *author*, *reader*, and *text* are employed in the broad sense of the words, meaning both filmmaker and novelist, film viewer and novel reader, and novels and films respectively. According to narratologists, the same story, conceived as the content of narrative message, can be transmitted in a number of ways, for example in the form of a novel, a comic-strip, a series of paintings, a film, a television miniseries, a ballet, a play, and so on. The expression codes pertaining to the nature of different media may affect the mode of narration and the formal organization of the narrative up to an extent, but basically the story-content remains the same because it obeys the inherent narrative codes shared by all media. In this case, having taken into consideration the difference between the verbal narrative discourse of the novel and the audiovisual mode of narrative presentation in film, I will attempt to explore their commonly shared codes of narrative form and structure. Highly abstract notions, such as narrative structure, focalization, retrospective, and reiterative narrative strategies, etc., will be easily comprehensible because they will be presented visually through film excerpts on video, each video clip illustrating an abstract idea.

A narrative then, in the form of a film adapted from a novel, can be an excellent case study for explaining and illustrating aspects of the theory of narrative fiction. In the last two years I have been using Guy Hamilton's "Evil Under the Sun," a detective story film, based on Agatha Christie's classic of the same title, for this purpose in my Introduction to Fiction course. It is a course addressed to freshmen with the aim to introduce them to basic elements of the theory of narrative fiction. The reason why a detective story is chosen from all possible genres, is because the detective story is an archetypal form for all narrative, as it will be demonstrated later. But first a few words on the nature of narrative seem to be in order here.

Narratologists posit three terms for the textual analysis of narratives: Story, Text, and its Narration. Story and Narration are conceived in abstract terms, while Text is the only concrete entity available to the reader. Text is what we actually experience, while reading or viewing. "In it [the text], the events do not necessarily appear in chronological order, the characteristics of the participants are dispersed throughout, and all the items

of narrative content are filtered through some prism or perspective (focalizer)" (Rimmon-Kenan, 1983, p. 3). Reconstructing the narrated events in their natural chronological order occurs at the stage of analysis, after reading the text, and it is an exercise in abstraction. This is so because the reader reconstructs the narrative experience in his or her mind. Also, the act of narrating and the role of the narrator are abstract concepts; narrators and narratees are theoretical constructs employed to distinguish them from the real author or reader. The notions *narrators* and *narratees* are deciphered by reading indexical signs of their presence scattered through out the narrative. Thus, from what is inscribed in the text, we are able to appreciate authorial voice and attitude both towards the narrated events as well as toward the reader. By employing a film narrative as a case study, we take advantage of the concreteness and immediacy of cinematic image, as well as the versatility of video use, to render the above mentioned theoretical abstract notions more tangible and understandable.

In practice, the method of video application to the teaching of core theoretical issues is the following: A single session is devoted to the viewing of the entire film without any interruptions, so as not to spoil the pleasure of the first reading. Then in the next session, an analysis of the film's structure is attempted, introducing certain aspects of theory, such as plot structure and design, narrative strategies and modes of narration, the role of the narrator, and textual relationships. Specially selected excerpts from the film text are shown to illustrate abstract theoretical concepts in their complex interrelationships.

Analyzing the Film Text

The Nature of the Text and Textual Relationships

A good starting point is the complex relation between text and reader, which is central to the theory of narrative fiction. Rimmon-Kenan (1983) notes that this relationship derives from the paradoxical nature of the text itself:

> There is one end every text must achieve: it must make certain that it will be read; its very existence, as it were, depends on it. Interestingly, the text is caught here in a double bind. On the one hand, in order to be read it must make itself understood, it must enhance intelligibility by anchoring itself in codes, frames, *Gestalten* familiar to the reader. But if the text is understood too quickly, it would thereby come to an untimely end. So, on the other hand, it is in the text's interest to slow down the process of comprehension by the reader so as to ensure its own survival. To this end, it will introduce unfamiliar elements, it will multiply difficulties of one kind or another, or simply delay the presentation of expected, interesting items. (p. 122)

Of course authors are well aware of the nature of the text, which progresses by employing delaying devices. They are also aware of the reader's propensity to speed up reading in order to discover the *secret* of the narrative--all narratives do have a *secret*, as a rule.[3] Therefore, during the actual act of writing, the author calculates in advance the effect of his special techniques to generate suspense and promote pleasure in the reader. The secret of the narrative is well kept until its revelation time, the text does not yield its meaning too easily and therefore does not come to an ***untimely end***. In a sense, this antagonistic relationship between author and reader constitutes the game of fiction, with the text being a kind of shared common territory, a play field where their imaginations engage in a competitive struggle.[4]

The detective story by nature is the kind of narrative that best illustrates this notion of fictional game, since the *secret of the narrative* becomes literally the secret

that the process of detection aims to uncover. A detective story "purports to narrate the course of an investigation, but the 'open' story of the investigation gradually unravels the 'hidden' story of the crime. In other words, the initial crime on which the tale of detection is predicated is an end as well as a beginning. It concludes the 'hidden' story of the events leading up to itself at the same time it initiates the story of the process of detection" (Porter, 1981, p. 29). Since the crime in detective fiction becomes the tangible goal in the competitive struggle between author and reader, the game of fiction in detective stories has a more antagonistic character than in other genres.

"Evil Under the Sun" is a good example. It is a typical Agatha Christie story telling the sudden and unexpected murder of a former theatre actress, Arlena Marshall, on the beach of a resort island on the Adriatic. Having interrogated all the guests at the hotel and finding an alibi for each one of them, Hercule Poirot is nevertheless successful in eventually unravelling the identity of the murderer. In Guy Hamilton's film version of the story this process of investigation is graphically and vividly dramatized.

The film respects the ingenuity of the structure, so characteristic of the Agatha Christie story, although there are some minor plot alterations. The balance between ratiocination and mystification, so artfully created by Agatha Christie in the novel, is also maintained in the film, though the expressive means employed are different. After the standard expository sequence introducing the detective, the setting, and the characters, and an additional sequence of complication, stating the possible motives of practically all the characters who would want to murder Arlena, there follows the scene of the crime and clues. As usual in formulaic structures of this kind the story of the crime remains secret. The viewer is not given a chance to witness the actual murder, only the discovery of the murdered body. This will initiate the process of investigation that will maintain the viewer's interest undiminished until the end. Most of the narrative is taken up by the process of investigation. No matter how hard we, as viewers, try to speed up ahead of the narration and discover the culprit, that is, the murderer, we fail.

As a matter of fact, Poirot gives us a clue too many. This can be shown on video through the dialogue scene involving Daphne Castle, the hotel proprietor, Sir Horace Blatt, a business tycoon who has commissioned Poirot to find his lost diamond, and Hercule Poirot himself. When Poirot tells them that he is going to reveal the identity of the murderer after breakfast, both Daphne and Sir Horace are surprised and thrilled:

"You mean you know?" they ask him eagerly. "Well, give us a few clues." And then Poirot gives them a whole list: "All right, I wish you to consider very carefully: a bathing cap, a bath, a bottle thrown to the sea, a wrist watch, the diamond, the noon-day gun, the breath of the sea, and the height of the cliff. From that you should be able to solve it yourselves."

But due to the fact that we are overwhelmed by the multitude of clues and the fact that they are given to us verbally, therefore, in abstract form, we can intensify the challenge of the mystery by making use of the versatility of our teaching aid; we can carefully edit the particular shots scattered in the body of the narrative and assemble them together in a visual presentation. Thus we can have the concrete details of all the incriminating clues in a clip: A shot of the bathing cap that Linda is reminded to wear shows what the actual object looks like and, moreover, places it in the particular context of the story. Similarly, some shots of the bath taken by Christine to wash off the suntan lotion from her body establish it as a specific event in the context of eliminating incriminating evidence. The same can be said about the bottle of sun tan lotion she throws over the cliff. Thus, all of these clues acquire an air of particular concreteness and specificity: Linda's wrist

watch as Christine sets it 20 minutes earlier, the false diamond as it drops from Arlena's hand in the grotto, the noon-day gun going off, Arlena's perfume called *Breath of the Sea*, and the height of the cliff from which Christine allegedly waved to Linda. By showing all these details visually, we can make the puzzle of the crime even more vivid and challenging.

In spite of the fact that Daphne and Horace, who act as surrogates for the viewer here, are given so many clues, they still manage to find nothing. This is because, the author has planted various clues and gives us many hints, that instead of helping, confuse us more and retard the resolution process. According to Roland Barthes (1974), some of these clues are *snares*, otherwise called *red herrings*, because they offer outright false information. Others are *half truths, partial answers, suspended answers*, and so on.[5] Again, we can depend on the flexibility of video editing capacity to isolate some of these instances and render them more concrete visually: In most of these cases we can not help noticing the inquisitive probing of the camera through steady pans, tilts and zoom-ins, that guide our attention to inexplicable pieces of action and behavior in some of the characters. For example, why is Christine peering from the balcony of Linda's room at Linda going up the steps? Then what is Mr. Gardner looking at so intensely when following Christine and Linda with his eyes? And whose hand is it behind a tree's branches revealing the two women receding in the garden? What is it off the field of view that causes Daphne's surprised expression? What does the half-eaten carcass of a dead rabbit, consumed by worms, have to do with the story in question? These narrative incidents have absolutely nothing to do with the story offering the viewer clues (red herrings) that mislead the viewer and impede the progress of the narrative toward resolution.

Further, in a slow zoom-in we are presented a view of the hotel, and as the camera zeroes in on Kenneth's room we see his troubled or puzzled face through the curtains looking over the bay. The next shot is that of Arlena sunning herself at the beach alone, though we fail to see the connection. There are so many clues scattered throughout the sequence which confuse the issue and make matters more complicated, leading us astray. A visual presentation of these clues in this manner makes them more telling than a simple verbal description.

Backward Construction of Plot

The role of the detective in tales of ratiocination or detection parallels the role of the reader in encountering a narrative. Like the ideal reader, "the detective," as Porter (1981) remarks, "encounters effects without apparent causes, events in a jumbled chronological order, significant clues hidden among the insignificant. And his role is to reestablish sequence and causality" (p. 30). Peter Ustinov's incarnation of the notorious Hercule Poirot type is impeccable. As in the novel, the character of the idiosyncratic and whimsical Belgian super-detective, with the beady eyes and the curly moustache, is faithfully represented in the film. He is patterned after the traditional image of the artist-hero, initiated by Poe, with colossal ratiocinative powers and a keen eye for details, no matter how trivial or insignificant. In the film's narration, the camera identifies with Poirot's point of view most of the time, thus making the detective a surrogate for the viewer. And yet, despite the fact that we experience almost all events exactly as Poirot perceives them, we are surprised to find out that, as viewers, the solution to the crime escapes our intellect. On the contrary, Poirot, after some mysterious calculations and considerable reflection, announces he has discovered the identity of the murderer and is ready to explain how the victim was murdered. But we will return to the question of focalization or point-of-view immediately after we consider the plot of the narrative and the manner of its construction.

Detective fiction is characterized by a peculiar structure in which the plot is of primary importance. As mentioned above, the detective story actually consists of two stories, the one embedded in the other. One, the story of the crime, is known only to the criminal and the author. Both have strong reasons to keep it secret. The other is the story of investigation, the story we read. Detective fiction, then, is an archetypal genre exemplifying a displacement of chronological time. As Porter points out, "detective fiction is preoccupied with the closing of the logico-temporal gap that separates the present of the discovery of crime from the past that prepared it" (p. 29). Paradoxically, it is a genre that moves forward in order to move back. The primacy of the plot in detective fiction is clear since so much in the genre depends on the intricacies of the plot. This point was stressed by Edgar Allan Poe, the inventor of the detective tale, in his theory of artistic composition: "Nothing is more clear than that every plot must be elaborated by its dénouement before anything is attempted with the pen. It is only with the dénouement constantly in view that we can give the plot the indispensable air of consequence, or causation, by making the incidents, and especially the tone at all points, tend to the development of the intention" (Davidson, 1956, p. 453). We can demonstrate that the backward construction of narrative, in conformity to Poe's theory of composition, is standard practice in detective fiction and neither Agatha Christie's novel nor Guy Hamilton's movie is an exception.

Having the climactic moment of the unmasking of the murderer and the final explanations of the dénouement--at the end--as the starting point, we can retrace the various stages of plot development by moving backwards. Here is a diagrammatic account of the film's plot moving backwards:

- The ultimate moment of revelation of the crime: The actual scene of the murder followed by minor explanations in the dénouement. The criminals are eventually handed to the authorities.

- Hercule Poirot explaining his brilliant theory of how the murder was committed. Unmasking of the murderers (Patrick Redfern, the actual culprit, and Christine Redfern, his accomplice).

- Poirot announces he has come to the solution of the crime and he is going to reveal everything after breakfast.

- Poirot makes some time measurements with his stop-watch, testing a hypothesis of which we have no idea.

- The investigation itself: Practically all the hotel guests are questioned and all prove to have a "cast-iron alibi." Note that action is shown from the point of view of the suspect, denoting a different version of the story in each case.

- The moment of the crime, preceded by some clues. The actual murder is not shown, just the discovery of the victim's body. Poirot is asked to investigate.

- Complication: Setting the possible motives for each character. Accompanied by foreshadowing of the impending crime.

- Exposition: Introduction of the detective, the characters and the possible relationships between them, and the setting. Heightening expectations in the viewer.

As we move backwards, the author's strategy in constructing the narrative becomes obvious. The climactic moment of revelation is what the author has constantly in mind, and every part of the narrative is constructed step by step, in order to move the plot toward the ultimate moment of resolution. But at the same time, these passages that add to the movement towards closure also delay the final moment of resolution, simply because they take time to process. The plot in detective stories is not important in itself, but for the effects it has on the reader's expectations. Through the

intricacies of plot, the author creates a "composition that plays with the reader's sensibilities, arousing morbid curiosity, and having toyed with it for an appropriate length of time, by satisfying it in a totally unexpected way" (Porter, 1991, p. 27). The more the desired resolution is kept suspended, the more the reader's appetite is heightened and interest in the story is maintained undiminished.

Coming to the practical task of presenting the backward construction of the plot in the classroom, there are two possibilities depending on the time available. If time is limited, we can make use of the still function capacity of the video equipment to isolate the pertinent images from each section of the plot and present them as freeze frames. Their duration can be timed to coincide with the time it will take the instructor to describe verbally each stage of the plot. This technique presupposes that our video equipment will have a perfectly clear image at the still mode. If there is more time available, we may choose to select short one- or two-minute clips from each section, present them piece-by-piece, stopping the action for the appropriate commentary in each case. Thus the backward construction of the plot will be more vividly and adequately presented.

The superiority of video over other teaching aids, such as still photographs, slides, drawings, or diagrams on OHP, becomes apparent. With video clips we can present pieces of action intact, preserving their continuity, revealing narrative events *in motion*. After all cinema is the art of moving pictures, constructed in terms of time and space, two aspects that can be amply and fully presented solely through the use of video.

Aspects of Narration

This capacity of the medium becomes more evident in explaining aspects of narration, for example *focalization* and multiple *points of view*, *flashback*, *retrospective* narration, and the role of the *narrating agent*. In film theory, the notion of the narrating agent is quite problematic. Entering the long debate about the status of the narrator in cinema would be beyond the scope of this paper and would only confuse the issue. Suffice it to say that we have to theorize the existence of a narrating agent in film, who undertakes the telling of the narrative. As far as film narrating techniques are concerned, the standard mode of film discourse is a combination of objective and subjective point of view shots, especially when the director's objective is to enhance audience participation in the film events narrated.

In this film, we might say that objective point of view shots predominate, but there are several cases throughout the narrative, that the camera adopts Poirot's point of view, rendering him the focalizer and facilitating identification with the viewer. For example, early in the story, when Poirot is enjoying his favorite ice cream in a hotel lounge, he is made privy to something interesting. As he glances idly opposite him, he notices a handsome man, who is later proven to be none other than Patrick Redfern, sending his wife on an errant in order to be alone with a mysterious lady. From Poirot's point of view only her hand is seen, adorned by a gold bracelet, caressing Patrick's face. Along with Poirot, we infer that Patrick has an illicit affair with another woman. Later, at Daphne Castle's hotel lounge, right on the first night when all the guests gather for drinks, Poirot notices that the same golden bracelet, shown now on close-up, belongs to Arlena Marshall. At this point, a camera shot adopting Poirot's point of view, stresses the fact that the detective makes a discovery. Moreover, the next shot takes us from Poirot's beady eyes to a close-up of Patrick's face, so that the association of the illicit relationship between Patrick and Arlena is made clear both to Poirot and the viewer.

Focalization shifts occur mostly in two long sequences: (a) When Poirot interrogates the suspects and (b) when he presents his own theory of how the murder was committed. In the first case,

we have a visual account of the events as seen from the point of view of each suspect in his or her version of the story. Thus we end up having multiple storytellers (narrators) and multiple agents of perception (focalizers), through whose points of view we get different approaches to the search for *truth*. These little pockets of narrative content become instances of what narratologists call *analepses*, or as more commonly known, flashbacks.[6] Video is the appropriate means to show these time displacements in the narrative evoked by flashbacks. For example, the same narrative material presented from a different point of view gives a totally different version of the story: The visual presentation of Christine's action leaving Gull Cove to return to the hotel for a game of tennis agrees with the account she gives verbally during her interrogation by Poirot. A slightly different visual presentation of the same events is given during Linda's narration of the story. Finally, a totally different presentation occurs later when Poirot gives his own account of what actually happened. The differences can be immediately registered and be more easily appreciated when shown by video clips.

When the same piece of narrative (given through these flashbacks, each by a different focalizer) is told more than once, we have the phenomenon designated by narratologists as *reiterative* narrative. In other words, the narration shifts back to a posterior point of narrated time and retells the same event. This may be spoken by another agent, who temporarily is invested with the role of a narrator, and can either be witnessed through his or her eyes, or seen through the eyes of someone else. It is a very complicated concept to explain verbally, therefore, by actually presenting it on video, we manage to make it more easily comprehensible. Instances of literative narrative are many: The discovery of Arlena's body, for instance, is shown in the film's diegesis for the first time, when Patrick accompanied by Mrs. Gardner, who serves as a witness, finds her dead on the beach. Both the focalization and the narration are objective, that is, from the point of view of a third party, the film's narrating agent. Later, however, when Poirot develops his theory and refers to this episode, the same scene is presented, this time shot from different angles to designate the point of view of Mrs. Gardner. Now, the view of Arlena's body lying in the sun as experienced from Mrs. Gardner's point of view in the boat is totally different. Mrs. Gardner was not close enough to distinguish whether this was actually Arlena's body, or Christine's, who, according to Poirot, was posing as Arlena in order to establish an alibi for her husband, Patrick, the real murderer. By actually presenting the spatio-temporal dimensions of the narrated events, the argument made verbally by Poirot in the hotel lounge acquires a distinct visual concreteness and lucidity.

Additionally, the instructor has also the chance to illustrate visually the abstract concepts of retrospective (flashback) and reiterative (repetitive) narrative modes, as well as the theoretical notions of narrator, narratee, and narration, which are standard terms in narratology. The best examples to illustrate these ideas can be found in the climactic sequence where Poirot reveals the identity of the criminals. All the guests are kindly asked to gather in the lounge and comfortably seat themselves so that Poirot can start telling the real story of the murder of Arlena Marshall. The scene therefore is set in time present with Poirot narrating the events of the story, thus assuming the role of the narrator, and the guests, listening to the story, assuming the role of narratees. However, as the events of the story of the crime presented by Poirot belong to the past, the diegesis in the present time is interrupted by a series of visual passages, depicting events in time past, while Poirot continues delivering his theory in voice over. In other words, the visuals presenting events in the past support the aural argument of Poirot, acting as narrator, in the present. For example, when Poirot starts developing his theory, he begins by saying that all the suspects seemed to have an alibi, but actually one of them was lying:

"It was you,"--he pauses momentarily, then turns suddenly to confront Christine, "Madamme Redfern!" Several insert shots of various guests in the lounge are added here to register the surprise on their faces. Then a shot of Christine follows defending herself while on the audio band we have the following dialogue: Christine: "Me, but I didn't lie to you, I swear it," Poirot: "Oh yes you did Madamme. en I asked you at what time you left Gull Cove yesterday, you said it was 12 o'clock. You knew this you said, because--the scene is interrupted here with a visual account of this action set in the past, showing Christine leaving Gull Cove and walking among the trees in the path leading to Ladder Bay, where the crime was committed. Meanwhile, Poirot's narration continues in voiceover: "You heard that awful gun go off" (sound of cannon heard in voiceover too), "when you were staying on top of the cliff"--shot of Christine on top of a cliff--"waving at Linda who was swimming in the water below." End of flashback, the narration returns to time present and the camera focuses on Poirot as he resumes his argument: "But Mr. Brewster was in the bay at the same time, it is very curious that you did not mention him. ...And yet he made no mention of you standing over the cliff. Why not?" Poirot now looming over Christine:. "The answer is very simple." Cut to the empty cliff: "You were not there!" This scene in which visual presentation shifts freely from the lounge (time present) to events in the past (in flashbacks) is an illustration of the concept of retrospective narration.

Besides, in order to support his argument, Poirot will refer himself to events that had happened prior to the time of the crime, which was established between 11:30 and 12:30 of the second day on the island. For instance, when Christine denies that she descended the ladder at Ladder Bay, where Arlena was sunning herself--as Poirot insists, she brings up the point of her suffering from vertigo. She would not have been able to climb down the ladder, she says, because she was afraid of heights. The flashback showing Ladder Bay ends with a cut to the lounge, with Christine speaking: "But I couldn't have climbed down the ladder, I suffer from vertigo! You know that." Cut to Poirot: "I only know that because you took good care to stage an incident showing me that you suffer from vertigo. Immediately the narration repeats the same scene shown quite early in the narrative where Christine had leaned against Poirot's shoulder, having a stroke of acrophobia at the edge of the terrace. This is an instance of reiterative narrative when the narration returns to repeat the same scene in a different context. During Poirot's narration of the story of the crime there are several such cases of repetitive or reiterative passages.

Conclusions

Video can be an excellent means to teach aspects of narrative theory. Through the presentation of elements of narratology it was pointed out that certain ideas are more abstract, just because they are theoretical, ideas pertaining to Story and Narration. But due to the capacity of video to make elusive and abstract ideas accessible and concrete, the difficult task of teaching literary concepts becomes easier and pleasurable. Moreover, even in the case of dealing with the rather concrete items of the Text, such as any of the particular details describing characters, events, and setting, video is equally helpful in rendering them more concrete and specific. These conclusions are drawn from practical experience in teaching elements of narratology during the last five years. There has been a distinct difference in student comprehension of literary and theoretical concepts between the first three years, when no video was used in this course, and the last two years, when film was introduced as a teaching aid. Although no formal attempt was made to measure the degree of the students' comprehension of the literary concepts taught in the course, personal observation of class discussions and evaluation of examination papers revealed that the students did in fact benefit from these simultaneous explorations in literary and

cinematic concepts through the use of video.

Footnotes

1 A typical sample of this kind of research in the U. K. is indicated by such article titles as: *Video and English Language Teaching in Britain*, pp. 1-17; *The Potential and Limitations of Video*, pp. 17-29; *101 Ways to Use Video*, pp. 43-57; *Video Applications in English Language Teaching*, pp. 69-83. In John McGovern (Ed.), (1983), *Video Applications in English Language Teaching*, ELT Documents Series, Pergamon Press in Association with The British Council.

2 For example, Baird R. Shuman & Denny Wolfe (1990), *Teaching English Through the Arts: Theory and Research into Practice*. The National Council of Teachers of English, Urbana IL. As stated in the Abstract, this book discusses teaching English through the arts...and intends "to help students make stimulating connections between English and some of the arts they know best--popular music, film, photography, design, drawing and painting, and drama. Following a brief discussion of the theoretical and research-based support for their ideas, the book presents 15 activities that focus on language, nine that focus on literature, and five that focus on writing."

3 Pierre Macherey (1978) observes that the movement of the novel is double: "the mystery must be concealed before it is revealed. Until that crisis the secret must press upon the mind or the heart of the hero, and the entire elaboration of the narrative consists in the description and the organization of this delay" (p. 29).

4 Play or Game theory has been evoked by a number of critics to explain the playful and game-like character of fiction. See Peter Hutchinson (1983), *Games Authors Play*, Methuen; R. Detweiler (1976), "Games and Play in Modern American Fiction," *Contemporary Literature*, *17*, 1, pp. 44-62; E. Bruss (1977), *The Game of Literature and Some Literary Games*, *New Literary History*, *9*, pp. 153-72; for an overview of Play and Game Theory in relation to narrative and a definition of fictional game, see M. Kokonis (1991), *Metafictional Games: The Play Element in Cinema and the Novel*, Ph.D. Dissertation, Aristotle University.

5 In his book *S/Z*, Barthes (1974/1970) notes five types of clues, of different degrees of significance and relativity to the story, planted in various parts of the narrative to enhance the enigma or mystery of the crime. They are part of the *hermeneutic* code of the narrative and their function is to suspend the advance towards resolution and deliberately mislead and puzzle the reader (pp. 75-76).

6 Gérard Genette (1980) employs specific terms for the categories of narrative, such as the flashback or the flash forward: *analepsis* and *prolepsis*. They are inherent codes of narrative discourse and apply to all narratives (p. 40). Also, for the notions of retrospective and repetitive modes in a narrative see the chapters on Order, Duration, and Frequency (pp. 33-160).

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